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"Have you seen Lord of the Rings?"
Power, Pedagogy and Discourses in a Multiliteracies Classroom

Abstract
Literacy today is characterised by rapidly changing and emergent forms of meaning making in the context of increased cultural and linguistic diversity, giving rise to the multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group. This paper responds to these imperatives, reporting findings from a critical ethnography investigating the interactions between pedagogy, power and discourse, and students' access to multiliteracies among culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The paper reports the way in which a teacher enacted the multiliteracies pedagogy in the context of claymation movie-making lessons with her year six (aged 11-12 years) class in Australia. A key finding was that students' access to multiliteracies differed among the culturally and linguistically diverse group because of a gap between multiliteracies theory and praxis. Specific recommendations are provided concerning the use of coercive power, and the need for culturally inclusive discourses when enacting the multiliteracies pedagogy to enable meaningful designing.

Willie[1], an Indigenous Australian, smiled at Julia as they filmed their claymation movie and asked, "Have you see Lord of the Rings?" Overhearing from the other side of the room, the teacher reprimanded, "Willie, that's got nothing to do with this!" This intertextual reference could have been recruited for an apprenticeship into hybrid, multimodal texts, with its potential for the discussion of creative visual and auditory text combinations. Willie used a different social language to engage in literacy practice – one that communicated solidarity with others.

This paper reports significant findings of an ethnographic study that investigated an Australian teacher's enactment of a pedagogy of multiliteracies in the context of a series of multimedia-based lessons in the students designed claymation movies. The multiliteracies pedagogy of the New London Group involves four related components that are continually revisited: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice (New London Group, 1996). Situated practice involves building on the lifeworld experiences of students, situating meaning making in real world contexts. Overt instruction guides students to use an explicit metalanguage of design. Critical framing enables students to critically analyse and interpret the social and cultural context and the political, ideological, and value-

centered purposes of texts. Transformed practice occurs when students transform existing meanings to design new meanings (New London Group, 2000).

The findings in this paper focus on the teacher's use of power and discourses and their influence on the students' access to multiliteracies observed in a socio-economically and ethnically diverse class. Comparisons are made between the learning that occurred for students of the dominant, Anglo-Australian, middle-class culture, and for those who were from socio-economically or ethnically marginalised backgrounds.

The reporting of this research is timely because the twenty-first century is characterised by greater cultural and linguistic diversity in schools and society, creating the need for more inclusive literacy pedagogy. As society becomes more globally connected, diversity within local contexts is increasing. Globally, the clientele of schools is drawn from an increasingly diverse mélange of ethnic, community, and social class cultures, with a wide range of texts, interests and group identities. For example, this study was conducted in a school that included students from twenty-five different nationalities. Participation in community life now requires that we interact effectively using multiple Englishes and communication patterns that cross subcultural and national boundaries (Lo Bianco, 2000; New London Group, 2000).

There is also a multiplicity of communication channels and media. This includes the increasing importance of new technical resources and systems for organising information that challenge previous notions about literacy teaching and learning. Both teachers and students must become knowledgeable experts in sophisticated hybrid and often hypertextual (linked media) systems of meaning. Understandings of literacy that are associated exclusively with print are inadequate. Literacy extends writing and speech to include digital, audio, visual, gestural, and spatial modes of communication, and multimodal combinations of these elements (New London Group, 1996).

These changes in the current global and national context have given rise to the term "multiliteracies", coined by the New London Group (1996). Multiliteracies is built on two key propositions. The first is the increasing importance of cultural and linguistic diversity as a consequence of migration and globally marketed services. The second is the multiplicity of communications channels and media tied to the expansion of mass media, multimedia, and the Internet. These two propositions are related because the proliferation of texts is partially attributable to the diversity of cultures and subcultures (New London Group, 1996).

The New London Group proposes that a pedagogy of multiliteracies should be a "a teaching and learning relationship that potentially builds learning conditions that lead to full and equitable social participation" (New London Group, 1996, p.60). This is achieved by moving from a standard, national or universal culture to foster productive diversity that acknowledges the multilayered lifeworlds of students:

> *The role of pedagogy is to develop an epistemology of pluralism that provides access without people having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities. This has to be the basis of a new norm (New London Group, 2000, p.18).*

The New London Group implies that the multiliteracies pedagogy will open possibilities for greater access. They acknowledge that in the emergent reality, there are real deficits including a lack of equitable access to social power, wealth and recognition. However, they claim that a genuine epistemology of pluralism, not a tokenistic one, is the only way that the educational system can "possibly be genuinely fair in its distribution of opportunity, as between one group and another" (New London Group, 2000, p.125).

The multiliteracies pedagogy may indeed have the potential to provide "access without children having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities" (New London Group, 2000, p.18). However, throughout the history of education there is evidence that schools have continually failed with minority and marginalized communities in literacy

education, serving to reproduce the patterns of social inequity in wider society (Luke, Comber, & Grant, 2003). The selection of textual practices in schools is not accidental, random, natural or idiosyncratic. Rather, it is political, often supportive of the stratified interests of the social institution of schooling, and has significant material consequences for learners, communities and institutions (Luke & Freebody, 1997). Marginalized and minority communities have the most urgent stake in the efficacy of literacy education. This is because there is a greater distance between their linguistic and lifeworld experiences and those of the school, than for students of the dominant culture (Cope, 2000).

Therefore, there is a need to evaluate the potential of the multiliteracies pedagogy to provide equitable access to powerful literacies for a wide representation of ethnic groups and social classes. This can only be achieved through classroom-based research, the beginnings of which are reported here.

Research Context

The research context was a year six classroom (students aged 11-12 years old) in a suburban state school in Queensland, Australia. Eight percent of the school's clientele were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, which is significantly higher than the national figure from the most recent Australian Census (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003). The school was situated in a low socio-economic area, and twenty-five nationalities were represented in the school's clientele, from twenty-four suburbs.

Teacher Participant

A pilot study was conducted to trial the research and to identify a suitable teacher participant and a culturally diverse class cohort. The selected teacher had received professional development in multiliteracies through the *Learning by Design* project coordinated by original members of the New London Group – Kalantzis and Cope (2005, p.179). She had knowledge and expertise in new, digitally-mediated textual practices.

Furthermore, she had gained many years of international experience teaching literacy in culturally and linguistically diverse teaching contexts, including inner city London, and working with distance education students in remote regions of rural Australia. The teacher spoke of her belief in the importance of multiliteracies and was a catalyst for the teaching of multiliteracies in the wider school locale.

Student Participants

The grade six class was streamed on the basis of results in the standardized *Queensland Year Five Test in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy* (Queensland Studies Authority, 2002). The class was comprised of eight females and fifteen males who were the twenty-three lowest-ability students. The class was mixed with regards to socio-economic status, comprising students from both working- and middle-class homes. They were also from varied ethnic backgrounds, including Anglo-Australian, Tongan, Thai, Aboriginal, Maori, Sudanese, and Torres Strait Islander students.

Eight students were withdrawn for English lessons with another teacher almost every day of the week, and these were the students whose literacy test scores were closer to average. The observed claymation movie-making lessons were often scheduled outside of the English period so that the teacher could work with the whole class. During claymation movie-making, the twenty-three students were divided into six small groups. The eight average-literacy ability students were divided into two groups rather than mixed with the fifteen lowest ability students, because of the timetabling and streaming arrangements.

Research Design

The methodology of this study was based on Carspecken's critical ethnography (1996; 2001; 2001). Stage One involved eighteen days of observational data collection over the course of ten weeks in the classroom. Data collection tools involved continuous audio-visual recording using a digital camcorder and two Dictaphones. Field notes and a self-reflexive

research journal were kept, and cultural artefacts were collected such as school policy documents, CD-ROMs of the claymation movies, and photographs. Stage Two involved the analysis of classroom data, including verbatim transcribing of lessons from the video and tape-recorded data, low and high inference coding. A list of raw codes and their reference details were compiled and later reorganized multiple times into progressively tighter hierarchical schemes. Carspecken's (1996) pragmatic horizon analysis, a detailed analytic tool that draws upon Habermas' (1981; 1987) *Theory of Communicative Action*, was applied to relevant segments of the data. In Stage Three, semi-structured interviews (45 minutes) were conducted with the principal, teacher, and four students of Sudanese, Anglo-Australian, Aboriginal, and Tongan students. In Stages Four and Five, the results of micro-level data analysis were compared using sociological theory and extant literature about access to multiliteracies.

Lessons

The lessons observed applied the multiliteracies pedagogy, consisting of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (New London Group, 1996). The aim was to enable learners to design a claymation movie in collaborative groups. Famous claymation productions include the "Wallace and Gromit" and "Chicken Run". These movies are based on an animation process in which static clay figurines are manipulated and digitally filmed to produce a sequence of images of lifelike movement. The design process involves shooting a series of frames, moving objects slightly between each photograph. When played as a digital film, the rapid and continuous sequence of photos gives the illusion of spontaneous movement.

The movie-making technique involved storyboard design, sculpting plasticine characters, constructing three-dimensional movie sets the size of small cardboard boxes, filming using a digital camera, and combining music or digitally recorded speech. The

students then digitally edited the movies with teacher assistance using Clip Movie software. The teacher presented the movies, using Quick Time Pro software and a data projector, to the parent community and to their "buddies" in the preparatory year level (age 4½-5). The movies had real, cultural purposes, and demonstrated the transformation of resources to design original, hybrid texts (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

Findings: Power, Discourses and Access to Multiliteracies

The findings are presented here in two sections. The first describes the most important findings concerning the influence of power on learners' access to multiliteracies. The second describes interactions between classroom discourses and its influence on the culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

Power and excluded learners.

Teacher: *There will be consequences for your actions today, Brandon Bird. You need to prove that you're working, otherwise – watch out! You won't be filming!*

There was significant conflict among the three boys who were designing a movie entitled "Breaking the News". These boys – Travis, Brandon and Justin – were Anglo-Australians from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Travis experienced significant learning difficulties such as an inability to concentrate, had high absenteeism, and frequently refused to engage in both independent and collaborative designing after situations involving conflict with the teacher. The teacher was in the process of referring Travis to a paediatrician.

Brandon was ascertained through standardized tests as intellectually impaired, and qualified for government funded learning support. He was often unable to contribute meaningfully to the teacher-directed discussions, even when nominated by the teacher to respond. Brandon generally followed classroom rules and despite his learning difficulties, and would attempt to respond to the teacher's questioning.

Justin used an informal dialect of English from his home, including bound morphemes such as catchin', c'mon, 'cept, 'cause, and gonna. He frequently resisted the school rules regarding appropriate ways of behaving in the classroom. The following transcript is an example of Justin's typical behaviour during independent work in the computer room.

> *We've got about six children who are just lounging around. Look at your body language! [Teacher looks directly at Justin] You've got your hands behind your head, and you're leaning back like you're in the Bahamas, and you are so far behind in your work. You haven't got time to scratch yourself!*

On several occasions, power relations between the three boys – Travis, Brandon and Justin – escalated into physical fights and swearing. The teacher intervened to create spatial and physical boundaries to separate the boys during these times. The teacher decided to negotiate a contract with the whole class to determine how much school rule breaking would result in exclusion from claymation movie-making. The following interaction is one of the most significant in the study in relation to power and its attendant relationship to learners' access to multiliteracies. The teacher addressed the class:

> *We need to decide what the punishment is going to be for people who are kicked out of claymation. We've got people with three crosses against their names, and we've had groups today that have been swearing at other people, not cooperating - arguing. This group of boys who were working over here got almost nothing done today, and if it wasn't for me intervening, I'm quite sure there would have been a serious fight. So Brandon, and Justin and Travis – your group is this close from being completely shut down and cancelled [shows small gap between fingers]. Because I'm that unimpressed with the work that you're doing. So what should be the cut-off? Should it be that when you have a certain number of crosses against your name on the blackboard that you don't get to film? Should it be if your movie set is not finished by the end of next week, you don't get to film?*

These sanctions were negotiated as fair, to afford everyone the same opportunity for success conditional upon following the established rules. The negotiable aspect of this interactively established contract was to determine the number and type of rule violations that would invoke the sanctions, such as arguing on two occasions, or swearing once. The students could also decide whether individuals or the group would receive the sanctions if one member did not follow the rules.

The teacher had predetermined that the threat of sanctions was being "kicked out" of claymation movie-making or the group "shut down". Therefore, the sanction – exclusion from claymation designing – was not negotiable. Furthermore, these negotiations occurred in the context of unequal power relationships that exist between the teacher and students within the school institution. The following transcript illustrates the beginning of this negotiation process.

Transcript 11, Section 3

23 Teacher: We're going to vote on this as a class. Anyone else got a suggestion?
24 Jack: Yeah, if your name is on the board and you have a cross as well.
25 Teacher: So your name and a cross as well, and you should be out. Just that person or the whole group?
26 Jack: Just that person
27 Teacher: Just that person. [Does] anyone else have a suggestion? Because I am sick, I am tired and I'm cranky, and there are people in this classroom I guarantee that won't be filming, because quite frankly, I don't have time for it. It's pathetic, the behaviour I'm getting.
28 Emma: If you swear, you can't film.
29 Teacher: So if you're a person who swears, you get kicked out instantly?
30 Children: Yeah

During this negotiation process, normative statements about the right ways of acting in the classroom were used to control the social setting such as:

> *For you to be allowed to do claymation, you have to be able to work independently. You don't need to have me there to hold your hand and make sure everyone is feeling nice about themselves and doing the right thing. You're in year six!*

This normative discourse rendered the legitimacy of the new standards and sanctions unquestioned. The outcome was the establishment of three sanctions for violations of the

rules. The majority of students voted that the sanctions would be administered when students had three accounts of rule breaking involving any situation at school. Individuals who swore once would receive the sanctions, rather than the whole group. The teacher also established a non-negotiable sanction:

> *I tell you right now: the whole group, or any group, who does not have their set, and their props, and their characters finished by next Friday, will not be filming.*

All three sanctions prohibited access to digitally mediated designing. The following week, a new notice was displayed prominently on the back wall of the classroom differentiating between the students who had received the sanctions (Figure 1.0). The public poster served to make the dominant discourse official, and made the teacher's ephemeral or temporary speech permanent. This poster served to legitimize the sanctions. It also applied exclusionary techniques to differentiate the children by three behavioural categories as a means of tracing the limits that defined difference and boundary.

Figure 1.0 Classroom Poster for Explaining Excluded Groups

Groups to Film
Slip, Slop, Slap [Samuel, Matthew, Andrew, John],
Inventing a Car [Jim, Benjamin, Wooraba],
Making A Healthy Sandwich [Willie, Darles, Julia],
Junk Food Gives You Pimples [Katherine, Rachel, Alexandra, Malee],
Look for Cars [Jonathan, Sean, Pewan, Emma]**.**
Not filming – sets not complete on time: *Breaking the News* [Travis, Justin, Brandon]
(You may display your work completed at book launch but not film).
Not filming because of behaviour: Anthony, Cody, Travis, Justin, Brandon

The "Breaking the News" group – Travis, Justin, and Brandon – were listed in both categories of exclusion for having incomplete sets and for rule-breaking behaviour. The fourth learner excluded was Cody from the "Inventing a Car" group.

The teacher would often regulate Cody's behaviour by punctuating her direct instructions to the whole class with "Cody". He had one of the highest levels of absenteeism during the observed lessons. The fifth student to receive the sanctions was Anthony, from the "Healthy Sandwich" group. The teacher described Anthony as her "main behaviour problem". He continually sought attention from both peers and the teacher,

moving out of his seat, calling out, and adopting exaggerated gestures and movements. All five boys excluded were Anglo-Australians from low socioeconomic backgrounds, while the remainder of the class were predominantly Anglo-Australians from middle class backgrounds. The enactment of these sanctions functioned to exclude the economically marginalized males from the full repertoire of multiliteracies. In the teacher's words, they were "now out of the race". Power operated as a form of dissimilation; that is, sorting students according to their social class location, within the classroom (McLaren, 1994).

The full implications of the sanctions became apparent during the following weeks when the remainder of the class continued the digital aspects of movie making, while the boys were required to finish their story writing. The sanction excluded the boys from two more hours of movie set designing involving three-dimensional visual and spatial modes, two hours of digital filming, two hours of audio designing, and one hour of digital editing and special effects using ClipMovie software. Monomodal literacies, that is, literacies using linguistics only, became the sanction for violating the rules. This replaced claymation movie making, which involved digitally mediated, multimodal designing for a real world purpose.

Power and monomodal literacies.

It is significant that the use of power differentiated the curriculum for students who violated the rules, because monomodal literacies, such as writing stories, replaced multiliteracies. The teacher's perceptions of monomodal literacies and multimodal literacies are implicit in the following statement:

> *I've told my kids that if they get their name on the back wall, they're not allowed to do claymation. They'll just sit down and do normal work. Because some of the boys' – their behaviour is starting to get out of control.*

Here, the teacher's claim underscores her view that claymation movie making does not constitute "normal" literacies. The teacher perceives that these digital, multimodal forms of literacies are not the core of a literacy curriculum, and therefore, this privilege can be withdrawn to maintain social order in the classroom.

This perception that monomodal literacies can be used as a sanction for school rule breaking was observed repeatedly in the wider locale of the school. For example, the principal had established a behaviour management system in which the students received rewards for avoiding the accumulation of "red cards". All students began the year as "level ones" and could progress to the next level at the end of each quarter or term. The aim was to reach level five by the end of the year. The receipt of one red card prevented a student from progressing to the next level until the following quarter. At the end of each term, the school cohort were labelled and sorted into rooms. Students in levels two to five received rewards, such as watching a movie, while "level ones" completed monomodal literacy exercises, such as adding suffixes to root words. In this way, monomodal literacies that were decontextualized from uses of literacy in the real world became a form of social control in the school institution.

It is important to recognize that monomodal literacies are not equal to the multimodal, digitally mediated textual practices in terms of the social goods that are accorded to these forms of literacy in society (Bull & Anstey, 2003). All literate practices are not of equivalent power in terms of the socioeconomic gains and cultural knowledge they generate, with some having negligible relevance to community and occupational contexts. Therefore, access to more literacy does not equate with access to more social power, because literacies have different statuses, functions, and social relations in different institutional contexts, tied to the use of power.

To conclude this section, the teacher's use of power had a significant influence on students' access to multiliteracies. Carspecken's typology of power relations distinguishes between four types of power – normative, charm, contractual, and coercive (Carspecken, 1996). *Normative power* associates power with status alone, and without foregrounding other reasons (Carspecken, 1996). An example of normative power is when a teacher asks a student

to assist another who cannot navigate a website, and the student quickly helps simply because students must obey teachers. *Charm* requires the possession of a certain ability to use culturally understood identity claims and norms to gain the trust and loyalty of others (Carspecken, 1996). For example, charm is employed when a teacher praises a child for their good idea, causing a peer, who has made little contribution to a collaborative task, to start participating enthusiastically and industriously. *Contractual power* is an agreement specifying reciprocal obligations between parties, with one party having greater power to determine the course of an interaction. An example of this is when a student produces a well-edited story using neat handwriting, knowing that the teacher rewards students with stickers when appropriate attention is given to these aspects of presentation (Carspecken, 1996). *Coercive power* is the threatening of sanctions by a superordinate to force obedience from a subordinate. The subordinate is expected to comply, not on the basis of the super-ordinate's status, but in order to avoid an unpleasant sanction (Carspecken, 1996).

In this study, the use of coercive power selectively prohibited the five boys from gaining access to digitally mediated, multimodal designing. However, the use of coercive power alone did not deny students access to multiliteracies, because learners still possessed agency and could act to avoid the threatened sanctions. The boys exercised their agency by applying their discursive and practical knowledge of the school environment to oppose the system. For example, the boys actively opposed the authority relations of the school and had a well-developed ability to identify points of weakness in the disciplinary power of the system. They found ways to escape the surveillance of the teacher in legitimate ways during formal lessons in the back regions of the school, such as the bathroom. They spent extensive time drawing pictures instead of writing during the enactment of the sanctions. In this way, they applied their power to modify the sanctions for their immediate benefit, demonstrating a form of oppositional agency often overlooked in the analysis of power in schools.

Parallels can be drawn between this study and Willis' (1977) classic qualitative research in which a culture of "resistance" was evident among working class "lads" in and outside the classroom, in response to the unequal power relations between students and teachers. Similarly, McLaren's (1993) theory of resistance explains that boys' episodes of resistance to power worked in conjunction with the sanctions to implicate them further in their own domination. This resistance was often demonstrated bodily in the posture of the boys (McLaren, 1993). For example, in the current study, Travis would pretend that he couldn't hear the teacher's instructions even when she was in close proximity. Willie would often slump in his chair and look downwards when he was reprimanded. Learners' postures showed implosion and constriction when conceding points of defeat in interactions of unequal power (Carspecken, 1996). Resistance was evident holistically in the boys' bodies, as they became sites of struggle.

Applying McLaren's (1993) theory of resistance, the use of the coercive power was not a "powerful" strategy with respect to making students productive and compliant workers. Rather, the use of coercive power was ineffectual against student resistance, helping to secure a loss of meaning making for the boys. This condition was exacerbated by increased absenteeism of the boys following the enactment of the sanctions. Correspondingly, the boys' resistance to domination ironically weakened the school's potential to help them rise above oppressive forms of work in society.

Relations of power in the classroom were systematically asymmetrical, tied to interactions between coercive power and the boys' resistance to the dominant discourse (McLaren, 1993). This domination was masked by inviting the students to negotiate the minor details of the sanctions through an interactively established contract, concealing the teacher's authorisation of the sanctions that ultimately prohibited access to certain forms of multiliteracies.

This following section describes the most salient findings concerning the interactions between classroom discourses and students' access to multiliteracies. Discourses are defined here as socially accepted ways of displaying membership in social groups, such as through words, actions, and values (Gee, 1992). The focus of these interactions is the degree to which the middle class, Anglo-Australians were able to draw from their existing cultural resources, as compared to working class and ethnic minorities.

Marginalized versus dominant discourses.

It was observed on multiple occasions that students were not always free to draw from their *primary discourses*; namely, the linguistic patterns and social practices of their community socialization (Gee, 1992). In this example, the teacher uses a question-and-answer sequence to discuss the visual design elements of a Big Book entitled, "Lester and Clyde" (Reece, 1976).

Transcript 3

158 Teacher: What has the illustrator done here to show you that it's not a very nice pond? Willie?
159 Willie: Um, it looks like the rubbish has been chucked in there.
160 Teacher: But how did the illustrator show that. How did they do it?
161 Willie: Oh, by um, like, just chucking stuff in there.
162 Teacher: What? Did the illustrator throw things in there?
163 Willie: No
164 Teacher: Or did they draw pictures?
165 Willie: Yeah
166 Teacher: Well, then you need to explain it. Can you say, "They drew pictures of rubbish?"
167 Willie: They drew pictures of rubbish.
168 Teacher: Benjamin
169 Benjamin: They drew the pond and the leaves and that to make it look rotten.
170 Teacher: It looks a little bit rotten, but what tells you… I can even see that it smells. What has the illustrator done to show you that it smells?

The teacher highlighted Willie's "unacceptable" primary discourse – "chucking stuff" – in this whole class conversation. Willie may have misinterpreted the term "illustrator", and not considered that a designer of the fiction book had drawn the pollution. The teacher

initially reacted to Willie in disbelief, "What?" She challenged the statement, asking Willie to clarify it, and successfully elicited the correct answer by rote. Willie duly repeated the teacher's dominant discourse (Gee, 1996). The teacher then asked Benjamin, an Anglo-Australian, to respond, and received the "correct" response. What is significant here is that Willie's primary discourse was not successful because it did not belong with the *secondary discourses* of the classroom – the language patterns of various institutions outside of early home and peer group socialisation (Gee, 1992; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996).

Willie had control of oral discourses to gain camaraderie with others, both students and teachers. He was often the first student to introduce himself confidently and amiably to classroom visitors. The researcher had a chance meeting with Willie in a nearby mall during evening trading. He had almost sold a complete box of candy bars for a charity, selling to cashiers who were not busy at boutiques. This demonstrated his success with the winning discourse of marketization (Fairclough, 2000, p.163).

However, Willie varied from the required classroom norms by drawing from his primary, Aboriginal discourse. Willie's speech often included bound morphemes, such as "Watcha doin'?" or "We've been wasting a whole million watchin' her doin' her shoes." Such expressions mean that the speaker is communicating greater familiarity with, and less distance towards the listener, regarding them more as an intimate acquaintance. Speakers intuitively blend various degrees of "in" and "ing" to convey the appropriate solidarity or respect (Chambers, 1995; Gee, 1993; Labov, 1972; Milroy & Milroy, 1987). This language has meaning in the Indigenous community – a culture that has retained a strong oral tradition. However, it was not part of the dominant discourses in the institution of Western schooling. Willie's primary discourses could have been used to scaffold other modes of communication, rather than being corrected or prohibited in the classroom.

Willie predictably transgressed the discursive systems through which discourses are formed and that govern what can be spoken or remain unspoken, and who is permitted to speak with authority or stay silent (McLaren, 1994). For example, Willie was often censured for unsolicited replying – giving responses without waiting to be nominated by the person in authority (Cazden, 1988). This took place in during a lesson in which the teacher directed the subject matter and used a common, three-part progression of interactions – teacher Initiation, student Response, and teacher Evaluation (IRE) (Mehan, 1979). This frequently used discourse in Western schooling involves the contributions of student only by invitation of the teacher. According to ethnographic research by Cazden (1988), unsolicited replying is characteristic of Aboriginal discourse.

Willie had not assumed the "identity kit" of the dominant speech, attire, and behaviour of a good student (Gee, 1996). He often forgot to remove his hat when entering the classroom, and was unable to capably accomplish classroom errands. He was labelled, "Travelling-At-Will Doyle", by the teacher. Willie constantly looked for legitimate avenues to subvert the classroom rules, such as by walking to the drinking fountain, borrowing stationery, or going to the bathroom during lessons to remain in physical motion.

Ethnically marginalized learners were frequently unsuccessful because the secondary discourses rendered them unable to draw from their existing cultural, semiotic resources for meaning making. In the following example, teacher requested a group to explain their movie plans during storyboard designing. Pewan spoke Thai at home, having only arrived in Australia the year before.

Transcript 6, Section 3

237 Sean: "Look right, Look left, look right" [infant voice], then the car's there, and they walk across, but they saw no car there, and the car was there. The car had just turned out and came out [picture provides external referents].

238 Teacher: Sounds to me like you two [points to Sean and Jonathan] are doing a lot of the thinking. What's Pewan done today?

239 Sean: She's...

240 Jonathan: She's just…

241 Emma: She's trying to…
242 Teacher: Ok, Pewan, can you tell me what you're doing today? What's your job?
243 Pewan: Mum.
244 Teacher: You're going to be the mum? [character in the movie plot]
245 Children: Yeah.
246 Teacher: And are any of these your ideas today? Have you got any suggestions? Have you thought about what we should use on the set? Are you going to have trees? Are you going to have hills?
247 Sean: That's what she's thinking
248 Jonathan: Yeah
249 Teacher: Can you make sure that Pewan has some suggestions?

The teacher commended Sean and Jonathan for their contributions to the storyboard, contrasting this with Pewan's failure. Her peers endeavoured to advocate on Pewan's behalf, making incomplete statements to defend Pewan's effort (Lines 239-241). They empathized with her divergent life-world, culture, and language experiences. Pewan was interrogated with five rapid, consecutive questions (Line 246), requiring her to make a case for her contribution to the storyboard. This was exceedingly difficult for Pewan who had never uttered more than two words at a time, and who relied on common nouns or verbs.

Pewan did not possess adequate linguistic resource, and therefore, responded with silence (Line 246). Sean began to provide a defence for Pewan based on her thought processes – a subjective truth claim that was validated by Pewan's contribution to the visual elements of the collaborative design. Similarly, Jonathan demonstrated cultural inclusiveness by affirming Sean's claim (Line 247). Pewan's proficiency with the dominant, Anglo-Australian, middle-class discourses was trialled. The door was open to native speakers of the dominant discourses, but closed secularly to the non-natives – those who were not born to the dominant discourses. There was conflict between the secondary discourses of the classroom and Pewan's primary discourses, social identity and Thai culture to which she was intimately united (Gee, 1996).

The teacher's IRE pattern of discourse influenced the manner in which Pewan was regarded during this shared reading of the Big Book "Lester and Clyde" (Reece, 1976) (Mehan, 1979).

Transcripts 3

102 Teacher: Tell me two things about Lester. I'm going to be asking Travis and Pewan this time [Pewan has not raised her hand to answer a question]. Pewan, tell me two things about Lester?
103 Pewan: [no response]
104 Willie: Old [unsolicited response]
105 Teacher: He's definitely not old. Clyde's old. Don't tell her. What's two things you can tell me about Lester the frog? [long pause] I'll come back to you. Travis, two things?
106 Travis: He's smaller and cheeky.
107 Teacher: He's smaller and he's cheeky, Ok! Pewan, anything else you can tell me about Lester?
108 Pewan: [no response]
109 Teacher: Listen to the sentence: *Lester is smaller, and he's a lot of fun, a naughty, a cheeky, a mischievous one.* What can you tell me about Lester?
110 Pewan: [no response]
111 Teacher: Is he a good frog?
112 Pewan: No
113 Teacher: So what tells you that he's not a good frog?
114 Anthony: Because he's…[unsolicited response]
115 Teacher: I'm asking Pewan, thank you. Who can tell Pewan what words there tell us about Lester? [no response from Pewan] Willie?
116 Willie: [inaudible response]
117 Teacher: I can't hear you. Sit up, Willie.
118 Willie: He reckons that he has fun.
119 Teacher: He's full of fun, but I want to know, "What words there tell that he is not a good frog? Katherine?
120 Sean: mischievous
121 Teacher: mischievous
122 Anthony: …and naughty
123 Teacher: And naughty – thank you! Did you hear that Pewan – naughty and mischievous? They're the words that we just read, and that's describing him.

Pewan failed to engage "successfully" in this IRE discourse commonly found in Western education (Mehan, 1979). She did not possess the English linguistic resources to name the character traits listed in the story. Pewan's inability to succeed in this interaction

was based on difference rather than deficit. Her social identity was constituted in her Thai culture and language, which was not required. This IRE discourse could not scaffold Pewan's language to afford her equal status in the classroom. An apprenticeship was required that is based on the recruitment of Pewan's existing repertoire of language resources, and the cultural identity it represents (Gee, 1996).

The following example is used to draw a distinction between the unsuccessful and successful use of the IRE discourse. Two Anglo-Australian, middle-class girls were required to prepare a script for their claymation movie entitled "The Case of the Disappearing Pimples".

Transcript 13

927 Support Teacher: What are you saying?
928 Alexandra: She's… she's going to take the person who has pimples who is [acted by] Malee… she's going to take her to the shops to buy all…stuff.
929 Katherine: Yeah
930 Teacher: Ok, and what are …what are you going to say? "Let's go to the shops…"
931 Alexandra: "Do you want to put something on to… um, to try this stuff on your face?"
932 Katherine: And um…
933 Support Teacher: "Do you want to get some of this stuff on your face?" Is that a nice job for the preppies? [preparatory school audience] Prep school students are age five. Are you going to have them listening to you saying, "Are you going to come and get this stuff?" No!
938 Katherine: No, you would say, "Would you like… to come to the shops and buy some of the … cosmetics?"
939 Support Teacher: "Some cosmetics!"

The teacher required the design of a movie script, and proceeded to demonstrate the appropriate discourse (Line 930). She challenged Alexandra's casual discourse in respect to its aptness for the informative purpose of the text (Line 933). Katherine and Alexandra then produced the appropriate "Standard" English, which pleased the teacher (Lines 938-939).

940 Support Teacher: Good. Ok. And what else is going to be said?
941 Alexandra: And then, "Do you want to buy some fruit?"
942 Support Teacher: At the, at the…at… Oh, I see! [Observes backdrop of a supermarket]
943 Rachel: We're also got a party…there's a big party!
944 Support Teacher: By gee! You're leaving your work extremely late!

945 Support Teacher: Well, you need to really, really, really…I don't know… I don't know how on earth you're going to …[finish everything]
946 Katherine: Miss Taylor said, um…
947 Alexandra: We've got a lot of time. We've been working really hard.
948 Support Teacher: Oh, Ok, Ok. That's fine.

The tension was dissipated when Katherine and Alexandra used their knowledge of the dominant, Anglo-Saxon, middle-class discourses of the classroom to gain the approval of the teacher (Line 946). The girls also demonstrated their possession of the "right" values of Western schooling: "We've got a lot of time", and "We're working really hard" (Line 947). They had power to access the required knowledge of the classroom discourses, and were successful in fulfilling the teacher's expectations.

The teacher's dialogue with Katherine and Alexandra reproduces parent-child interactions in middle-class, Anglo-Australian homes (Gee, 1996; Mehan, 1979). These two-way "fill-in-the-blank" conversations build toward more lexically precise description. The girls simply called upon the conventions of their primary discourse that reverberate with Western schooling. Katherine and Alexandra were not conscious of the IRE pattern in classroom discourse, but they were practised in these oral scaffolding interactions illustrated above. These ethnically, socio-economically, and linguistically dominant students were proficient in ordering the expected dialogue within the boundaries of the secondary discourses of the classroom. This is attributed to their lifetime of enculturation into the social practices of institutional education and meaning making. This socialisation process provides them with an "appropriate" language, from linguistic resources to knowledge of middle-class, Anglo-Australian school practices. These language forms involve common understandings that reside among the dominant social group (Bull & Anstey, 2003; Gee, 1992).

Conclusion and Recommendations

These findings do not challenge the validity of the multiliteracies theory and its aim to be "fair" and its rules "even-handed" (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Rather, the problem concerns the translation of the multiliteracies theory to classroom practice, in which a wide gap was observed. Practical steps are necessary to enable teachers to negotiate the difficult dialogue with the varied lifeworld experiences of students to provide equitable access for all. The findings reported here indicate that the teacher's translation of the multiliteracies pedagogy to classroom practice did not ensure that all learners had access to all literacies.

In particular, it was observed that the enactment of coercive power prohibited five boys from being socialized into valued multiliterate practices of contemporary society. The complex social, institutional, and cultural relationships in these interactions played an important role in determining what literacies formed part of these boys' lives. The students' existing cultural knowledge and social power also played a significant role in who gained access to multiliteracies and who did not. Not all learners had access to all literacies. Rather, literacies were distributed, available, and accessible along the overlapping social characteristics of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status within the context of the dominant institutional structure of the school and the society. This confirmed the principle of critical sociology that access to knowledge and cultural capital is discursively situated in relations of power (Carspecken, 1996, p.22).

The New London Group's (2000 p.18) ideal is to "provide access without children having to leave behind or erase their different subjectivities". These findings demonstrate that this goal can be co-opted by the enactment of coercive power; however, through the awareness of teachers, this need not be the case. Coercive power can implicitly maintain learners' existing levels of access to multiliteracies as a marginalizing practice of social

regulation. This can became so habitual or "natural" in the school setting that educators accept marginalising practices as normal, unproblematic, and expected. Yet who was included, excluded, valued or denigrated by the enactment of coercive power in this study, was not arbitrary or random, but was tied to the power and status of the learners in the context of the dominant culture (Luke et al., 2003).

Carspecken (1996, p.131) states that coercive power is usually employed within normative frameworks that legitimate it. Classrooms are normative cultural milieus in which actors are differentiated in terms of who has the most power to determine the course of interactions. There is never equal communicative input from all actors involved. When actors in superordinate positions enact coercive power, the unequal distribution of literacies can be normalized, legitimated, or ignored. This is because there is a normative cultural model at work that historically defines what is expected of students and teachers.

Therefore, a key recommendation is that the use of coercive power – as opposed to normative, charismatic and contractual forms of power – should not be used to order the social space because it may prohibit certain students from accessing multiliteracies (Carspecken, 1996). This may result in the differential distribution of literacies because marginalized groups, whose values have the greatest conflict with school norms and rules, may have a culture of resistance to sanctions (McLaren, 1993; Willis, 1977). Furthermore, distributing monomodal literacies to students who resist the school rules is not arbitrary or inconsequential. Rather, it is essentially a form of regulation in the interests of dominant groups, mirroring the distribution of power in the wider society (Luke et al., 2003).

The successful provision of access to multiliteracies for all students requires that educators draw upon non-coercive forms of power, ensuring that certain learners are not prohibited from participation in culturally and linguistically diverse, multimodal and digitally mediated forms of meaning making. In this way, the enactment of the multiliteracies

pedagogy can function within the normative cultural milieu of schooling in a manner intended by its proponents – as a system of inclusion rather than exclusion.

A key recommendation for the use of discourses is that a pedagogy of access demands a reassessment of selective traditions that are often implicit in the discourses and power relationships of the classroom, reflexively transforming them in the interests of marginalized groups. Access to multiliteracies requires more than the extension of monomodal literacies to include multimodal combinations of design elements. Furthermore, access to multiliteracies necessitates more than a veneer of the multiliteracies pedagogy – situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing and transformed practice – over the anachronistic structures of existing discourses.

The effective implementation of the multiliteracies pedagogy requires that teachers reflect on and analyze the discourses of their own culture. The use of discourses in all dimensions of life is often unconscious, unreflective and uncritical. Discourses safeguard their users by performances that appear to be "normal", "natural" or "right". When teachers unconsciously and uncritically act within their discourses, they become compliant with a set of values that may unwittingly marginalize certain students.

Teachers who seek to enact the multiliteracies pedagogy successfully have an obligation to gain meta-knowledge about discourses in order to resist unreflexive, routine practices that limit the potential of students. Students also need space to juxtapose diverse discourses and to understand them at a meta-level through a language of reflection. Through such an approach to multiliteracies, students can transform and vary their discourses, create new ones, and experience better, socially just ways of being in the world (Gee, 1996, p.190-191).

Cultural and linguistic diversity must be seen as a powerful classroom resource for access to multiliteracies, not only for marginalized groups, but also for the benefit of all.

Classrooms must be places for the negotiation of regional, ethnic or class-based dialects, hybrid cross-cultural discourses, and variations in vocal register that occur according to social context. Likewise, classroom discourses need to create spaces for code switching, different registers, and multiple modes of meanings. When learners juxtapose different languages, discourses, and forms of communication, they gain meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic abilities, and in their ability to reflect critically on complex system and their interactions (New London Group, 1996, p.69).

These culturally inclusive practices transcend tokenistic tributes to diversity in multicultural classrooms, such as celebrating ethnic traditions, which can mask real conflicts of power and interests between dominant and marginalized groups (New London Group, 1996, p.69). The challenge for educators is to create places for community where pluralized worlds of individual experience can flourish (Cazden, 1988). Only then can education open the possibilities for greater access, and in turn, provide access to symbolic capital and real answers to the needs of learners in our changing times (New London Group, 1996, p.69).

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